



VAGABOND

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Hobo Advice Trainhopping: Myth vs Reality (self.vagabond)

submitted 3 months ago * by [huckstah](#) [Trainhopper / Hitchhiker](#)

Trainhopping has existed in North America for well over a century, and it has certainly had it's fair share of folklore in contrast to reality.

When you consider that trainhopping is an underground subculture, and that it has been glorified in various books and movies, the amount of myths starts outweighing the facts.

• The Bulls Will Kick Your Ass! MYTH

No, the bulls are not going to beat your ass. Times have changed and there are no longer the guards with wooden clubs.

Ninety-nine percent of the time, the bulls are going to simply ask you to leave the train yard and warn you not to return. If you want to be a dick, or if the bull is simply being a dick (which some are), he will quickly write you up a citation/ticket for trespassing on



2015

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railroad property.

If you want to take it a step further, and do something stupid, such as making it a verbally abusive or physically threatening engagement, he has every right to call the cops on you, or defend himself by beating the living shit out of you. You will then likely be tossed in jail for a few days/weeks, and hopefully learn your lesson.

TL;DR - In the end, it really boils down to how you want to act:

A) Be respectful, and they will likely treat you with respect.

B) Act like a dick, and they'll likely give you a ticket or take you to jail. Get physical, and they have every right to defend themselves.

- **Hobos Only Hop Trains. MYTH**

Hobos today travel using a combination of traveling methods, although in the past we are generally known for hopping trains, which is still somewhat true today.

Modern day hobos will travel in anyway that they can afford, or that is most convenient. Hitchhiking, trainhopping, rubbertramping, backpacking/hiking, you name it, a hobo will use any form of low-budget travel possible to find their way to the next job.

In today's trainhopping subculture, it's not just hobo's that you'll find on the rails. You'll find hipsters, gutterpunks, crusty kids, weekend warriors, foamers, felons, hippies, musicians, oogles, and a wide array of other travelers as well.

It's a very wild and diverse subculture among trainhoppers, a subculture that has evolved far beyond the stereotypes of the

Vagabonds, Hobos, Hitchhikers, Trainhoppers, Squatters, Rubbertramps, Backpackers, and more.

Feel free to share stories and pictures about your adventures on the road, or share advice and tips with greenhorns and lurkers!

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1930's. You really never know who you'll meet outside the train yard, but for the most part, it's genuinely good travelers that are happy to share their campfire and their wine.

- **The FTRA gang will kill you!** MYTH

For those unfamiliar with who the **FTRA** (Freight Train Riders of America) are, it's a violent gang of train hoppers that peaked during the 80's and 90's. They did everything from trafficking drugs to violently murdering innocent hobo's and other transients. They were generally recognized by their black bandanas.

Today, there is no actual "organized" FTRA. There are travelers that do wear black bandanas, falsely claim to be FTRA, and have been connected to recent hobo deaths. Although these "wanna-be's" are not the original organized gang of FTRA, they're also not people you want to be hanging out with in the hobo jungle.

Also, there are lots of former FTRA members that are still on the road and the rails, but most of them are much older in age and no longer interested in harming people or restarting their gang.

As for the most part, the FTRA no longer exists. However, there are scattered remnants of the gang, along with violent wanna-be's, so always carry some form of protection (knife, monkey-fist, sock of pennies, pepper spray, whatever) if you're going to be hanging out near the rails.

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[-] **inhale_exhale_repeat** 2 points 3 months ago

What's rubbertramping?

[permalink](#)



[-] **huckstah** **Trainhopper / Hitchhiker** **S** 5 points 3 months ago

Traveling in a vehicle. Generally, rubbertramps are usually in vans and campers, but there are also rubbertrampers in buses, mini-buses cars, trucks, rv's, etc.

It's an awesome way to travel as long as you have a means to afford the gas and maintenance.

[permalink](#) [parent](#)



[-] **lotsoftuna** 1 point 1 month ago

So does rubbertramping kind of reference to the classic quote, I guess,

"Gas, grass or ass, no-one rides for free"?

[permalink](#) [parent](#)



[-] **ISIS_CALM_THE_F_DOWN** 1 point 3 months ago

if you don't mind could you explain what gutterpunks etc are that you listed?

[permalink](#)



[-] **Piterror** 2 points 3 months ago

Subreddit visitor here

Gutterpunks are essentially hobo punks; Punk rockers that try to live life without being shackled to society's consumerism.

That was a broad answer and I'm sure someone will answer it in detail.

[permalink](#) [parent](#)



[-] **huckstah** **Trainhopper / Hitchhiker** **S** 4 points 3 months ago

Nah you pretty much nailed the gist of it.

They are usually city kids that are punk, often anarchists, and they choose to live life on the road/rail as a means of rebelling and living off-grid. They are often squatting in abandoned warehouses, industrial sites, under railroad bridges, etc. They are a really interesting bunch, and most of them are some of the coolest

people you could ever talk to.

However, there is branch of gutterpunks called "crusties" or "crusty-fucks", and they are absolutely horrible fucks. They're often meth/heroin addicts, getting drunk and getting in fights, aggressively panhandling for money, constantly going to jail, etc.

[permalink](#) [parent](#)



[–] **Piterror** 1 point 3 months ago

Yup, exactly what I experienced visiting punk towns over the world. Lots of times they would have dogs and bred them to make money (at least the European crustys).

[permalink](#) [parent](#)



[–] **huckstah** **Trainhopper / Hitchhiker** **S** 1 point 3 months ago

Yeah, bulldogs and pit-bulls are often what crusty and gutterpunk travelers have here.

[permalink](#) [parent](#)



[–] **cheese725** 1 point 2 months ago

I know this is old, but is it possible to hop in a car on [one of these?](#)

[permalink](#)



[–] **huckstah** **Trainhopper / Hitchhiker** **S** 3 points 2 months ago

There's a way to do it on trains...not on those. You'd get busted way too easy.

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